ANOTHER COMMENT ON PROFESSOR WARREN'S ANALYSIS OF PURPOSE

THIS brief statement is the attempt to indicate a point of view that has not been thought out carefully by the writer, and may, therefore, meet difficulties he has not anticipated, but which should not be unintelligible on that account. It occurred to me in the course of meditating the statement of a really brilliant philosopher who said in conversation, "I do not believe in freedom because the idea of freedom is not scientific." Now this, it seems to me, sums up the spirit and conclusion of Professor Warren's essay "A Study of Purpose"[1] as well as of his article on "The Mechanism of Intelligence."[2] It would be interesting to review the various responses that Professor Warren's article called forth,[3] taking up with them Professor Sheldon's essay on "A Definition of Causation,"[4] but I fear that my own idea would get lost in so much discussion.

Whether we use the word freedom, or purpose, or intelligent control, makes no particular difference. The simple fact is that the idea of mechanistic determination is opposed to the idea signified by those words and by plenty of others.

Now, as my friend the philosopher said, "freedom is not scientific," and, of course, it is not. And this means that the purpose of science presumes a certain point of view and a certain postulate. In words that may be old-fashioned, but that are simple, the purpose of science is to explain, that is, to find the group of facts equivalent to the fact to be explained in the sense that when the former are provided, the latter will be produced. Whether this is the whole duty of science or not, we need not discuss just now. It is, in any event, a very important part of science, the part that gives to science its human significance, since by it we learn to handle facts as resources. In the present statement, however, it will do to say, with respectable tradition, that science looks for causes, and aims to explain.

Now when a cook prepares a meal from the data of the ice-box, she postulates that those data are such as will conform to her purpose. And when a builder orders materials for construction, he assumes that with them construction can be carried out. If the result

[1] This JOURNAL, Vol. XIII., pp. 5, 29, 57.

[2] *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. XXVI., No. 6, November, 1917.

[3] Lawrence J. Henderson, "Teleology in Cosmic Evolution," this JOURNAL, Vol. XIII., p. 325; Mary W. Calkins, "Purposing Self *versus* Potent Soul," *loc. cit.*, Vol. XIV., p. 197.

[4] This JOURNAL, Vol. XI., pp. 197, 253, 309, 365.

is not as anticipated, then there has been a mistake somewhere. If things do not show the "structure" expected of them, we have been misled (we *say and believe*) into trying to use something else instead.

We no longer confuse formal truth (= dialectical consistency) with material truth. We know now that logic is not an existential science, but a technique of formal implications. If dialectic is not existential, what is? If no amount of pure logic would demonstrate the existence of a single dodo in the wilds of Australia, what would? Evidently, or so it seems to me, observation provides the authority for existential judgments. The only way to prove that a dodo exists, one perfect dodo, if you like, is to produce it. If, now, empirical observation is the only basis for existential judgments, how does this bear upon the statement that everything that happens is causally determined in the sense of this discussion? I admit the looseness and frequent ambiguities of my account, but I think they do not obscure the real issue.

Somehow the old conflict between faith in freedom and faith in determinism persists, in spite of the fact that freedom is not scientific and that we see quite clearly that it is not. What can science do with a category that denies the possibility of explanation by causes, except deny it? It can do one thing that would seem highly reasonable, and that is to recognize the methodological function of its own category of causality. Universal determinism is clearly not an empirical discovery if observation is the one criterion of existential judgments. Universal determinism is a theoretical position, and there is no reason to be surprised if a theoretical position misrepresents any data to which it does not apply, if there be any such. And whether there be any the theory itself could never say, since it is a generalization to the contrary based upon other data.

In a word, the principle of universal determinism is not a metaphysical discovery. No doubt, if I were more conscientious I would write a long chapter at this point, defining the word "metaphysical," but, frankly, I am not so conscientious as that. But why is this generalization so confidently made, and why does he who is no less confident of freedom, and of the power of intelligently directing events, feel so perplexed and so deferential to this technique and theoretical generalization? From the point of view of science, freedom has not a foot or a crutch to stand on. Why then does the discussion persist in one terminology or another? Why does Professor Warren feel it incumbent upon a scientist to refute the popular impression that "purpose" makes a difference to what happens, and why does his very interesting refutation bring out a throng of protests? What gives such irrational, unscientific, and embarrassed

vitality to an idea that can not possibly have any scientific standing? This is really, I think, a fair question. It seems to me that one possible answer is suggested by the above considerations.

Why, however, the scientific generalization? It will hardly do to say "because it is scientific"; that is just what I want to have explained. And what if it is? How does the adjective "scientific" confer justification? Again, one answer at least is easy enough. The spontaneous is the region of the uncontrollable. Causality is a principle in the service of practical intelligence. Whether or not it is more, it is that at least and that to begin with.

Determinism defines process and events as capable of being directed. If it has been found out that *A* results from the combination of *X*, *Y*, and *Z*, then we know what the conditions are of getting *A*. Whether we can control those conditions and thus get *A* is another problem, and not a scientific one. Determinism is a postulate of intelligence in the world. Morality is abandoned to the blindness of the categorical imperative, to the obsessions of conscience, or to the whims of romantic preference unless particular results are to be brought about in particular ways. Intelligence can exist only where objects to be acted upon show docility and routine. Spontaneity on their part would be fatal to every plan and programme. To quote from a clever skit on psychology[5] in which a visitor to a psychological laboratory is obliged to check his soul at the door, the "pilgrim" is told, "You can not take it in, because if a single live and active soul got loose inside, it would make no end of trouble, and might wreck the whole science of psychology."

This symbolizes well enough what, it seems to me, is really the situation. It is not unlike what Kant supposed it to be. Only instead of being transcendentally imposed by the constitution of the mind, a category is imposed empirically by the requirements of practical intelligence.

This suggestion is in nowise offered as an experiment in apologetics. The dogmas of scientific method are, however, no less dogmatic than the dogmas of business and of traditional patriotism.

A postulate of practical intelligence has been naïvely universalized so as to be applied to its own applications. To conceive all things as producible, controllable, directable, including the imagination to be trained, the will to be educated, the intellect to be disciplined and informed is, apparently, to conceive them as the concrete effects of those determinate conditions which we have found out must be assembled if the effects are to be secured.

If the point of view that turns out to be empirically justified is

[5] "The Pilgrim and Psychology," *The Unpopular Review*, Oct.-Dec., 1917.

based upon our success in promoting by it the conditions that are favorable to man's existence and to the realization of his potentialities; if, to speak the language of the philosopher human κίνησις from δύναμις to ἐνέργεια is thwarted without it, it is not surprising that the principle of causality has been given unlimited scope, and that a gratuitous perplexity in metaphysics is piously esteemed.

This rambling screed began by conceding the claim that "freedom is not scientific." If we understand that the business of science is "explanation by causes," "freedom" certainly is not "scientific," but if we say that science aims at comprehensive and precise "description," perhaps the scientific point of view might be applicable to whatever can be observed.

Let us, just as a sporting experiment, perhaps, not minimize the controlling influence of human interests, morality, civilization, order, intelligent direction, over what we somewhat grandly label the scientific point of view. If intelligence, when successfully applied to the physical world, gives us these good things, it is no far cry to the inference (unjustified perhaps in metaphysics and in science) that intelligence is practical and a source of power, and that its chief postulate is to be understood accordingly.

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REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS OF LITERATURE

Automatisme et Suggestion. DR. H. BERNHEIM, Professeur Honoraire à la Faculté de Médecine de Nancy. Paris: Librairie Felix Alcan. Pp. 168.

Professor Bernheim in this little work deals with some rather ancient problems: automatism, sleep and dreams, somnambulism, the psychoneuroses and psychotherapy. It is written for those interested in psychology from the standpoint of a physician.

Professor Bernheim argues that hypnotism is not a specific or a morbid mental state, but only a form of sleep; that hypnotic suggestion is not different from other forms of suggestion; that somnambulism and trance and hypnotic states are only acted dreams. All of which we think has been accepted long ago.

Professor Bernheim gives a chapter on the psychoneuroses which is precise and clear, as far as it goes. He had apparently never heard of Freud or Jung or Bleuler; at least he never mentions them. He does not believe that there is any subconscious mind—which is very heartening and delightful. At least he says that the *psychisme* is *always conscious.* The mechanism of elaboration is always auto-